



DECEMBER 2011

SOUTH DAKOTA FAMILY FOCUS AN UPDATE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD SERVICE MEMBER AND FAMILIES

Family Assistance 800-658-3930

<https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/famsup/default.aspx>



SOUTH DAKOTA YOUTH

To all South Dakota National Guard youth and their families - please join us on **Saturday, January 14th** in Sioux Falls!

You're invited to a "tailgate" gathering with other Guard youth and families. We'll have pizza and make banners before the Stampede Hockey Game on January 14th. Our banners will showcase our military pride and we'll be sending them to our South Dakota Service Members currently deployed with the 139th, 200th, Det 48, 189th, 451st, and 842nd, and Air National Guard.

Game tickets are being offered at a discounted price for this group special. The Youth Program is not involved with ticket distribution or seating arrangements - forms are provided from the Stampede for this.

Please help us recognize our National Guard Youth and thank them for all they do! For further information and to RSVP for the "tailgate" gathering, contact:

Taryn Broomfield, State Youth Specialist
605-737-6919 or taryn.m.broomfield.ctr@us.army.mil

Join Us!!

Who: National Guard Youth and their Families

What: Evening of fun and hockey

When/Where: Saturday, January 14th in Sioux Falls with the Stampede

Why: To connect with other Guard Youth!

Youth: Wear something camouflage, part of your Service Member's uniform, or something with the National Guard logo to the game.

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Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) will NOT be available at schools who do not sign the DoD Memorandum by December 31st 2011!!!

What does this mean? The Department of Defense (DoD) is requiring ALL schools who want to accept federal dollars for YOUR education to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Starting January 2012, the only applications for FTA that will be accepted or approved in GoArmyEd will be for schools that have signed the DoD MOU all others FTA requests will not be approved.

For further information on this please see the attached flyer or click the link to the Family Programs home page:

<https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/famsup/default.aspx>

From The Director

I LOVE THE WINTER! Okay, to our *Family Focus* "groupies" you may recall I declared in our September issue, "I love the fall!" and that I also have a preference for the marching band over the football team. Well, I also love winter!

I grew up in Minnesota, and when you grow up in Minnesota it is not uncommon to be born with hockey skates and/or skis on your feet. Now a days, as in the case of my nephew, it is not uncommon to be born riding a snowmobile equipped for racing on icy Minnesota lakes. Well, I have retired the hockey skates, but not the snow skis. I flat out enjoy the thrill of flinging myself down a snowy hill, in a semi-controlled fashion, hoping that I get to the bottom in one piece.

Winter is also about enjoying Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Valentine's Day and making memories.

I hope you are able to make a positive memory this year - even if that memory is Christmas without your deployed Service Member. Surprise your kids and do something different you will all talk about for years to come!

If you are able, welcome someone into your home this season. You'll spread cheer and make a lasting memory. You may be able to include a family with a deployed Service Member, or someone that lost a loved one this past year.

We've all heard the statistics that the holidays are some of the loneliest times of the year. Keep an eye and heart open to someone who needs help. Help them create a memory this Holiday Season they will never forget.

If you are looking for "memory-making" ideas, ask your kids or try some of these: play board games in your pajamas, watch college football with team jersey's on, bake goodies for another family in your neighborhood, or play Guitar Hero with your kids. OR, my youngest son's favorite - go from the hot tub to the snow, and IN YOUR SWIM-SUIT ONLY, lay down and make snow angels. Now THAT's making a memory!

From all of us in Soldier and Family Support Services and Airman and Family Programs - **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Serving you, LTC Bryan Jacobson

PS. Got to go, the marching band is taking the ice!



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"Be Here" Attendance Campaign

School attendance is important in order to receive the best education, students need to "Be Here"! This year the DoDEA (Department of Defense Education Activity) is implementing a system-wide attendance policy for students in DODEA schools throughout the world. This new policy is consistent with those found in many public schools throughout the United States.

To assist in this effort, the DoDEA Educational Partnership Brach is pleased to announce the "Be Here" attendance campaign Toolkits!

These toolkits contain downloadable "ready-to-go" briefs, flyers, public service announcements newsletter/newspaper articles, message templates and much more. The resources are organized in 3 toolkits:

1. Schools & Teachers
2. Parents & Students
3. Military Leadership & SLOs

Whenever possible, the resources are provided in WORD or PPT. format so that they may be modified and/or revised to meet your specific needs.

Toolkits are available at:

<http://www.militaryk12partners.dodea.edu/behere.cfm>

STRONG BONDS 2012

Strong Bonds is a Chaplain-led program for Soldiers, Airmen and their families. There are specialized programs for married couples, singles and families. The week-end events are **FREE** and feature:

- ☐ Time away to rediscover yourself, your spouse and family.
- ☐ An opportunity to meet fellow SDNG members.
- ☐ Proven relationship, communication and problem-solving skills led by trained instructors.
- ☐ Practical skills that will help at home, at work and in your personal life.

Strong Bonds Calendar

January 21-22, 2012

Survival Skills for Healthy Families (Rapid City)
Got Your Back for Singles (Rapid City)
Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage (Rapid City)

February 11, 2012 Leader's Strong Bonds (Pierre)

March 10-11, 2012

Strong Bonds Post-Deployment (Sioux Falls)
Got Your Back for Singles (Sioux Falls)
Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage (Sioux Falls)

For a list of more events and more information on Strong Bonds check out the link below or contact the chaplain.

<https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/famsup/default.aspx>

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SDNG Full-time Chaplain Assistant
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Family Assistance... GUARD Yourself!

BE SAFE and MERRY :) Many Blessings to you this holiday season.

Tis' the season of scams - **DO NOT** reply to emails or pop up messages asking for personal or financial information. Legitimate companies don't ask for this information via email.

Check your credit report annually to ensure you are not a victim of theft.

The resource we are highlighting this month is The Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP). MSEP is a targeted recruitment and employment solution for spouses and companies that:

- Partners Fortune 500 Plus companies with ALL Military Services
- Provides human resource (HR) managers with recruitment solutions – military spouses
- Prepares military spouses to become competitive, “job ready” applicants
- Connects military spouses with employers seeking the essential 21st century workforce skills and attributes they possess

If you would like more information on this program please online at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil> or by phone at 800-342-9647.

What is a Yellow Ribbon Sustainment and Reunion event?

Sustainment and Reunion Yellow Ribbon events are held during deployment of the unit. The Yellow Ribbon Program focuses on supporting and enhancing resilience of the family while the Service Member is deployed and preparing families for Service Members return. Our goal is to provide families with information and resources to cope with separation and deployment issues. Both events reinforce spiritual and mental health, outreach, day care, family services, youth programs, and community.

Upcoming events!

10 December Sustainment Camp Rapid “Drop & Shop”
16 December 641st 60 Day **POSTPONED** until JAN 2012 Date TBD

SFC Penny Dickes
Yellow Ribbon Coordinator
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What does balancing have to do with the Holidays?

The holidays are fun and carefree, right? The reality is that we place too much pressure on ourselves to have the best, most beautiful, most bountiful, and the most fun at the holidays. We are so busy trying to accomplish this that we find it difficult to enjoy. There are many different kinds of stress that we all experience.

General Stress – Day to day living, finances, family relationships, work

Deployment Stress – Changing roles, change in finances, change in responsibilities

Holiday Stress – Additional pressure, expectations, increased responsibilities and activities

Stress is a normal response to positive or negative change, threats, or challenging demands. It can affect a person emotionally, mentally, physically, and behaviorally. Holidays trigger natural emotional responses: childhood memories, feeling the loss of family, missing holiday traditions, and loneliness. Separation from family and friends may magnify emotions: anxiety, sleeplessness, discontent, depression, anger, irritability, thoughts of suicide. And remember... **SUICIDE IS NEVER A SOLUTION**—

Signs and symptoms of stress:

Physical: headaches, muscle tension, shortness of breath, fatigue, changes in appetite, changes in sleep patterns, upset stomach

Mental: trouble thinking clearly, poor concentration, confusion, negative self-talk, forgetfulness, poor judgment

Emotional: feeling out of control, nervousness, anxiety, sadness/depression, hopelessness, increased anger, thoughts of suicide or death

Behavioral: aggression, excessive use of alcohol or drugs, inability to start or complete projects, compulsive gambling or sex or internet use

How to avoid Holiday Blues!

Balance and Prioritize: Make a budget and stick to it; It's OK to say “No”; Be realistic about what you expect; Accept that this holiday season may be different; Allow yourself to have your feelings; Try developing new traditions; Find ways to have fun; Prepare yourself for the post-holiday season.

Let go of perfection and challenge your preconceived ideas of what the Holidays *should* be and create what they *can* be. Accept lack of control over deployment events. Remember that reaching out and relying on friends and family is strength!

Practice positive self-care: Relaxation exercises, meditation / prayer, music, reading, positive self talk, allow yourself to have feelings, be a kid again – it's OK to play. Keep a positive attitude – realize you have a choice. Stay Fit: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Sleep and eat right, limit the use of alcohol or other drugs. Practice good “buddy care” and stay connected with other military families. Look for humor – it will find you. Pace yourself – remember that the holidays are more than one day, they are a whole season.

Summary: Stress is a normal reaction to change. When expectations and reality conflict, stress increases. Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress in yourself and your children. Children need your support and guidance to cope with their stress. Utilize coping strategies, practice self care, surround yourself with family and friends.

Ask for help: Chaplains, Military Community, and Military & Family Life Consultants.

TRICARE Update:

Many of you may have received a letter from SAIC indicating your personal information may have been compromised. **THIS IS NOT A SCAM** and SAIC has been contracted by the TRICARE Management Activity. Although the direct impact is low it is the responsibility of the company to notify you of the risk. The letter states SAIC is providing you with a **FREE** one year membership in the Kroll Inc's ID Theft Smart service. If you choose to take advantage of this resource your response is necessary by responding to the form enclosed with your notice from SAIC. If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact **TRIWEST** at 1.888.TRIWEST

IT IS WITH GREAT HONOR TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT YOU!
HOW MAY WE BE OF ASSISTANCE?

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Rachel VanderZee
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Kim Chase
Family Assistance Specialist
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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Family Assistance 800-658-3930

Chaplain 605-737-6009

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-Talk

Military Family & Life Consultants
605-393-5953

Airman and Family Programs
605-388-5962